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(54) Vehicle fuel system

(57) A vehicle fuel system has an electronic control module received within a fuel tank to send data to and receive data from the electronic control unit (ECU) for the vehicle engine and other vehicle control systems, to provide an electronic control of the vehicle fuel system and to receive signals from one or more sensors mounted within the fuel tank which provide information about the operation of the fuel system. The fuel system integrates a plurality of components into the vehicle fuel tank to reduce the number of openings through the vehicle fuel tank and the number of eternal connections which must be made in assembly of the fuel system into a vehicle. By disposing a fuel vapor canister within the fuel tank, each vapor vent valve within the fuel tank can communicate completely within the tank with the vapor canister with a single outlet extending from the fuel tank to communicate fuel vapor from the canister with an intake manifold of the engine. Desirably, this outlet may extend through the same opening in the fuel tank through which the fuel pump, vapor canister, electronic control module and other components of the vehicle fuel system are inserted into the fuel tank. Notably, the number of openings in the tank is reduced and in one embodiment, only two openings are used in the tank, one for a fill pipe through which fuel is introduced into the tank and the other for the insertion of the various

fuel system components into the tank.

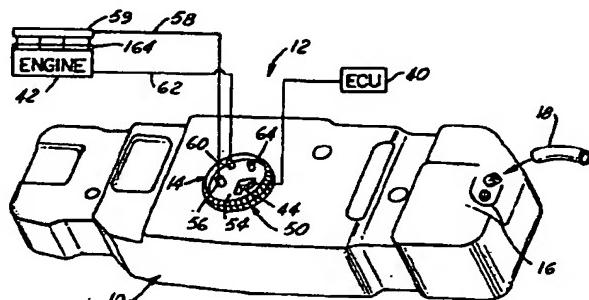


FIG.1



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PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

under Rule 46, paragraph 1 of the European Patent Convention EP 00 10 3801

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	
X	EP 0 624 722 A (FORD MOTOR CO ; FORD WERKE AG (DE); FORD FRANCE (FR)) 17 November 1994 (1994-11-17) * column 2, line 6 - column 3, line 34 * * column 4, line 38 - column 6, line 54; figures 1,2 *	1-4,8, 19,20	F02M37/10 F02M25/08
X	US 5 146 901 A (JONES GRADY D) 15 September 1992 (1992-09-15)	23	
A	* column 4, line 1 - column 7, line 55; figures 1-6 *	5	
A	US 5 197 445 A (CASARI JOHN) 30 March 1993 (1993-03-30) * column 2, line 21 - column 3, line 11 * * column 3, line 27 - column 5, line 16; figure *	5	
A	US 5 275 145 A (TUCKEY CHARLES H) 4 January 1994 (1994-01-04) * column 2, line 14 - column 3, line 50; figures 1-3 *	5	
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			F02M F02D
LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION			
<p>The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:</p>			
<p>see sheet B</p>			
<p>The present partial European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims.</p>			
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	
THE HAGUE	13 December 2000	Marsano, F	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			
T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			



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Application Number

EP 00 10 3801

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim
A	<p>PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1999, no. 03, 31 March 1999 (1999-03-31) & JP 10 318051 A (DENSO CORP), 2 December 1998 (1998-12-02) * abstract *</p> <p>-----</p>	5
TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)		

European Patent
OfficeLACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B

Application Number

EP 08 10 3801

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims: 1,5-7,9-11,18,21,22

A fuel system comprising a control module within the fuel tank and a fuel vapor canister disposed in the fuel tank.

2. Claims: 1,12-14

A fuel system with a control module inside the fuel tank and a cap releasably sealingly.

3. Claims: 1,15

A fuel system with a control module within the fuel tank comprising a temperature sensor disposed in the fuel tank.

4. Claims: 1,16

A fuel system with a control module within the fuel tank and comprising a hydrocarbon sensor disposed in the fuel tank.

5. Claims: 1,17

A fuel system with a control module within the fuel tank comprising a pressure sensor disposed in the fuel tank.

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 00 10 3801

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

13-12-2000

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